



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

**Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services**

**The State of Texas
2017 Annual Progress and Services Report**

**Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
Fiscal Years 2015-2019**

X. Statistical and Supporting Information

**Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
ACYF-CB-PI-16-03**

2017 Child and Family Services Plan
X. Statistical and Supporting Information
i. Child Protective Services Workforce

► *As part of the information on workforce provided in the APSR, States are to report, to the extent possible how staff is recruited and selected.*

DFPS currently recruits for CPS employees in several different ways:

Internet Presence

DFPS jobs are posted in the Health and Human Services Job Center. Postings are accessible through the main DFPS Web site, <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. By selecting the "Job" link, potential applicants are taken to the "[Come Work for Us](#)" page that includes worker job preview videos and written realistic job previews as well as a self-assessment tool that potential applicants can complete to help them decide if CPS is the right fit for them. Jobs posted in the Health and Human Services Job Center also automatically populate on the Texas Workforce Commission Web site for greater visibility. The agency also has a presence on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter where upcoming career fairs are announced and interest stories are posted.

Other Recruitment Efforts

Hiring staff attend local job fairs and university career fairs. Coordination with military bases and out processing centers has increased to attract veterans leaving the armed forces. Special interest stories or articles are occasionally used at the local level to promote employment with the agency. The last two are utilized in areas that are particularly challenged with a low applicant pool.

Pre-employment Testing

Employment selection instruments help identify the most qualified applicants based on child welfare research and surveys of existing high performing staff. Tools include: 1) a pre-screening assessment for job applicants to assess behavioral characteristics and skills 2) a written statement of interest that allows the candidate to express their passion for child welfare work and 3) a behavioral interview geared at assessing how each candidate would respond to real life work situations.

Targeted Degrees

Section 40.0326 of the Texas Human Resources Code requires that DFPS target recruitment efforts to individuals who hold a bachelor's degree or advanced degree in at least one of the following academic areas: Social work, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Elementary or Secondary Education, Sociology

or Human Services. The General Appropriation Act allows the agency to increase by 3.4 percent or 6.8 percent the starting salary of applicants holding a targeted degree. Hiring specialists and agency regional staff attend university career fairs and present to departments or classes to recruit students with the applicable majors. An internal review of existing staff identified as high performers held degrees in the targeted areas.

Stipends for CPS Investigators and Investigative Supervisors

DFPS provides a \$5,000 annual stipend to investigation caseworkers and investigation supervisors as authorized by the General Appropriations Act.

Bilingual Recruitment

DFPS recruits bilingual workers by using consistent testing for bilingual skills and implementing a consistent policy for bilingual pay.

Extra Pay for Social Work Graduates

DFPS provides a 6.8 percent or 3.4 percent additional starting salary for newly hired CPS employees who have a Master of Science in Social Work or a Bachelor of Social Work.

Focused Recruitment Activities

When certain criteria exists for any single job the agency will take special measures to ensure positions are filled timely and with staff that will stay.

Criteria

- Low applicant pool
- Low quality of applicant pool
- High number of vacancies

Solutions

- Offer 6.8 percent above base.
- Offer locality pay in certain locations.
- Organize job fairs in specific areas to interview many applicants.
- Partner with DFPS Public Information Officers to produce special interest stories about jobs.
- Add training sessions to accommodate all new hires.

- Hire immediately rather than wait for a specific training class to start.
- Coordinate with multiple supervisors to interview for their vacancies simultaneously to increase efficiency.
- Work with partners (Stark, NgA, DFPS Criminal Background Check Unit) to expedite all phases of the hiring process.
- Post jobs on job search Web sites or newspapers that target needed professionals.
- Request certain positions be posted as a "hot job" in the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System.

Degrees and certifications required for child welfare workers and other professionals responsible for the management of cases and child welfare staff:

Entry-level positions require a four-year degree from an accredited college or university. All majors are accepted, but there are targeted degrees that get priority consideration as explained in a previous section.

Demographic Information on Current Staff and Recent Hires		
CPS Caseworker Turnover, Tenure, and Race/Ethnicity		
Turnover Rate		25.70%
Agency Tenure	Less than 1 Year	21.80%
	1-3 Years	37.20%
	Greater than 3 Years	41.00%
Entry Salary*		\$32,976
Average Age		36.4
Race/Ethnicity	Anglo	37.60%
	African-American	32.90%
	Hispanic	28.10%
	Other	1.40%
Demographic Information on Current Staff and Recent Hires		
CPS Supervisor Turnover, Tenure, and Race/Ethnicity		
Turnover Rate		9.50%
Tenure as Supervisor	Less than 1 Year	15.90%
	1-3 Years	28.50%
	Greater than 3 Years	55.60%
Entry Salary*		\$42,244
Average Age		41.6
Race/Ethnicity	Anglo	46.60%
	Hispanic	26.60%
	African-American	25.20%
	Other	1.50%

Information related to tracking staff turnover and vacancy rates:

DFPS currently tracks staff turnover rates and the reasons for employee turnover, including promotions, retirements, dismissals, voluntary resignations, demotions due to voluntary and involuntary actions, and lateral moves due to voluntary and involuntary actions. The tracking system captures turnover rates by month, fiscal year, DFPS region and position type, as well as by other elements of interest.

Information on Child Protective Service Workforce

For child protective service personnel responsible for intake, screening, assessment, and investigation of child abuse and neglect reports in the State, report available information or data on the following:

- **Information on the education, qualifications, and training requirements established by the State for child protective service professionals, including requirements for entry and advancement in the profession, including advancement to supervisory positions;**

1. **Statewide Intake Specialist I:** Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university OR currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist I.
2. **Statewide Intake Specialist II:** Employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist for 9 months AND Statewide Intake Specialist Certification OR currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist II OR previous experience as a Statewide Intake Specialist II in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
3. **Statewide Intake Specialist III:** Nine months as a Statewide Intake Specialist II AND currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist II AND have received Statewide Intake Advanced Specialist Certification OR currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist III OR previous experience as a Statewide Intake Specialist III in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
4. **Statewide Intake Specialist IV:** Twenty-four months as a Statewide Intake Specialist III AND currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist III AND have an active Statewide Intake Advanced Specialist Certification OR currently employed as a Statewide Intake Specialist IV OR previous experience as a Statewide Intake Specialist IV in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.
5. **Statewide Intake Supervisor I:** Two years of full-time experience in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in child protective services*, adult protective services**, or protective services statewide intake.

6. **Statewide Intake Supervisor II:** Two years of full-time experience as a Statewide Intake Supervisor I OR have 2 years supervisor experience in Texas CPS, Child Care Licensing, or Adult Protective Services, with a minimum of 1 year as a Statewide Intake Supervisor I.

*CPS is professional social work where primary duties are providing social casework services to abused, neglected, or exploited children and their families; or in recruiting, studying, and certifying foster and adoptive homes.

**Adult Protective Services are those provided by the agency or a protective services agency to disabled adults, ages 18 to 64, elderly persons, or persons served at Mental Health Mental Retardation facilities that are in a state of abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

1. **Child Protective Services Specialist I:** Bachelor's degree OR an Associate's degree plus two (2) years of relevant work experience OR 60 college credit hours plus two (2) years relevant work experience OR 90 college credit hours plus one (1) year of relevant work experience.

2. **Child Protective Services Specialist II:** Employed as a Child Protective Services Specialist I for 9 months AND have received Child Protective Services Specialist Certification OR currently employed as a Child Protective Services Specialist II in DFPS OR previously employed as a Child Protective Services Specialist II in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

3. **Child Protective Services Specialist III:** Employed as a Child Protective Specialist II for 9 months AND have received Child Protective Specialist Advanced Certification OR currently employed as a Child Protective Specialist III in Texas DFPS OR previously employed as a Child Protective Specialist III in Texas DFPS.

4. **Child Protective Services Specialist IV:** Twenty-four months as Child Protective Specialist III AND currently employed as a Child Protective Specialist III AND have received Child Protective Specialist Senior Advanced Specialist Certification OR currently employed as a Child Protective Specialist IV in Texas DFPS OR previously employed as a Child Protective Specialist IV in Texas DFPS.

5. **Child Protective Services Supervisor I:** Eighteen months of full-time experience in Child Protective Services* in the DFPS or Protective and Regulatory Services/Department of Human Services and completion of Child Protective Services Specialist Certification OR A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, plus eighteen months of full-time experience in Child Protective Services* or child placement services** in a public social services agency and completion of Child Protective Services Specialist Certification OR Currently employed as a Child Protective Services Supervisor I in the DFPS.

6. **Child Protective Services Supervisor II:** Two years experience as a Child Protective Services Supervisor I OR currently employed as a Child Protective Services Supervisor II in the DFPS OR Currently employed in a Department of Family and Protective Services management position in the Child Protective Services program at a level above Child Protective Services Supervisor AND prior experience as Child Protective Services Supervisor in the DFPS or Protective and Regulatory Services. Sixteen months of experience in a Child Protective Supervisor I position is acceptable if the supervisor has a Master's degree in a human services related field.

Acceptable Substitutions:

- Any current or former employee of the Texas DFPS who meets the current Minimum Qualifications (with the exception of certification requirements) and who, as of September 1, 2000, has eighteen months experience as a Child Protective Services worker.
- Any applicant who meets the current Minimum Qualifications (with the exception of certification requirements) and who has two years of experience as a Child Protective Services worker or supervisor in another state.

*Child Protective Services is professional social work where primary duties are providing social casework services to abused, neglected, or exploited children and their families; or in recruiting, studying, and certifying foster and adoptive homes.

**A Child placement service is the Decision Making process around placing and monitoring children in licensed 24-hour childcare facilities and in adoptive placement in compliance with state and federal regulations.

The comprehensive CPS Training program provides staff with values and skills necessary for their roles at each stage of their CPS career. The training program includes New Employee Development, Continuing Education for Tenured Caseworkers and Supervisors and Leadership Development. A detailed description of the CPS training program can be found under **Program Support** of this year's 2013 Annual Progress and Services Report.

See **Program Support** of this year's 2013 Annual Progress and Services Report for additional data.

Demographic information of the child protective service personnel

Gender of Intake and Investigation Staff in FFY 2015

Stage	Gender	Percent
INTK	Female	79.6%
INTK	Male	20.4%
INV	Female	78.8%
INV	Male	21.2%

Ethnicity of Intake and Investigation Staff in FFY 2015

Stage	Ethnicity	Percent
INTK	African American	28.6%
INTK	Anglo	44.0%
INTK	Asian	0.5%
INTK	Hispanic	26.2%
INTK	Native American	0.7%
INV	African American	32.4%
INV	Anglo	39.5%
INV	Asian	0.9%
INV	Hispanic	26.6%
INV	Native American	0.6%

Age Group* of Intake (INTK) and Investigation (INV) Staff in FFY 2015

Stage	*Age Group	Percent
INTK	< 25	6.1%
INTK	25 - 29	25.8%
INTK	30 - 39	36.6%
INTK	40 - 49	20.8%
INTK	50+	10.7%
INV	< 25	8.1%
INV	25 - 29	27.2%
INV	30 - 39	36.4%
INV	40 - 49	18.8%
INV	50+	9.5%

*Note: Age is based on the employee's age on the last day of the federal fiscal year (9/30/2015) or their age as of their last day with the agency during FFY 2015.

Information on caseload or workload requirements for such personnel, including requirements for average number and maximum number of cases per child protective service worker and supervisor (section 106(d)(10) of CAPTA).

Caseload information is as follows:

Stage	Avg Count	Max Count
INTK	1.4	27
INV	15.3	68

Note: Because daily caseload is calculated during the state fiscal year, using a weighted factor based on each employee's tenure, neither count above is an accurate reflection of "CPS daily caseload". Rather, these counts represent cases assigned to each employee throughout the federal fiscal year. The INTK caseload information depicts CPS workers that were assigned INTK stages during the federal fiscal year (FFY). There is both an average count during the FFY and a maximum count during the FFY.

CPS Supervisors and Caseworker Caseload and Demographic Information

(FFY 2015)

Stage	Avg Count	Max Count
CVS	23.0	125
FBSS	14.1	46

NOTE: Because daily caseload is calculated during the state fiscal year, using a weighted factor based on each employee's tenure, neither count above is an accurate reflection of "CPS daily caseload". Rather, these counts represent cases assigned to each employee throughout the federal fiscal year.

Stage	Gender	Percent
CVS	Female	86.8%
CVS	Male	13.2%
FBSS	Female	86.3%
FBSS	Male	13.7%

Stage	Ethnicity	Percent
CVS	African American	32.3%
CVS	Anglo	39.0%
CVS	Asian	0.8%
CVS	Hispanic	27.2%
CVS	Native American	0.7%
FBSS	African American	33.4%
FBSS	Anglo	33.6%
FBSS	Asian	0.7%
FBSS	Hispanic	31.6%
FBSS	Native American	0.7%

Stage	*Age Group	Percent
CVS	< 25	7.5%
CVS	25 - 29	27.1%
CVS	30 - 39	37.3%
CVS	40 - 49	17.7%
CVS	50+	10.3%
FBSS	< 25	8.2%
FBSS	25 - 29	26.3%
FBSS	30 - 39	35.8%
FBSS	40 - 49	19.0%
FBSS	50+	10.6%

NOTE: Age is based on the employee's age on the last day of the federal fiscal year (9/30/15) or their age as of their last day with the agency during FFY15.

DFPS, like all Health and Human Services Enterprise agencies, is required to use a private vendor for human resource functions. The applicant tracking system does not transfer the degree information documented on the application to the new employee's personnel record. Additionally, there is no uniform data format required by the application system. Consequently, this information is not available in a useful format.

DFPS recognized the importance of this information and had developed a plan to capture the information at the time a candidate begins employment (is "on-boarded"); however, the procedure for capturing the information was not implemented as planned. There was not an automated way to load the information into the employee personnel record and tracking would have been a manual process. The agency has since expanded the role of an outside vendor that performs initial applicant screening and has the capacity to capture degree information. Improvements were made as planned after January 2015, which has facilitated more reliable collection of applicant data. Matching applicant data to eventual hires still requires some manual intervention but the agency has gained greater insight into the types of degrees held by applicants.

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ii. Juvenile Justice Transfers

► *Report "the number of children under the care of the State child protection system who are transferred into the custody of the State juvenile justice system." Provide contextual information about the source of this information and how the State defines the reporting population (section 106(d)(14) of CAPTA).*

In Texas, juvenile justice cases are separate and distinct from child protective services cases brought by DFPS. Cases are not automatically transferred when a juvenile in the custody of DFPS becomes involved with a juvenile justice agency. Although the juvenile court may give responsibility for the child's placement and care to the local juvenile probation department, DFPS often retains custody of the child and the two cases proceed separately. If a juvenile is committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department because of serious or repeated offenses, the CPS court is more likely to dismiss DFPS custody, if DFPS has temporary legal custody (conservatorship). However, the CPS court is prohibited by statute (Texas Family Code) from dismissing DFPS custody in such circumstances if DFPS has permanent legal custody (conservatorship).

For this purpose of this report, DFPS considers a child transferred to a juvenile justice agency if DFPS custody was dismissed within 30 days before or after the child was adjudicated. Using this method, DFPS concluded there were 1 child in DFPS custody in state fiscal year 2015 whose custody was later transferred to a county juvenile probation department.

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iii. Child Maltreatment Deaths

Child Maltreatment Deaths

Texas has a robust and systematic approach for ensuring that information regarding child fatalities can be made publicly available upon request, see Texas Family Code Sec. 261.203. The process for creating the reports has been automated to the greatest extent possible.

Effective September 1, 2015, CPS implemented a process to provide the public information on Near Fatalities in much the same manner as information is provided on abuse/neglect related fatalities. The process is that designated staff review the IMPACT information for the case and complete a form using summary information. The form is then reviewed by the Open Government Attorney to ensure that only releasable information is included. The information can then be provided to the public upon request.

The source of information used for reporting child maltreatment fatalities is the "reason for death" field contained in the DFPS IMPACT system. The Reason for Death field indicates whether or not the fatality was related to abuse or neglect and whether or not CPS had been previously involved with the child/family.

DFPS uses information gathered by law enforcement and medical examiner's offices to reach dispositions in the child fatalities investigated by DFPS. We have added fields in IMPACT to document preliminary or final medical examiner findings regarding cause and manner of death. Medical Examiner finding information is not transmitted to the federal National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System as it does not currently have a field to receive this information. Preliminary or final medical examiner findings regarding cause and manner of death reporting is considered as part of the decision making process for the CPS Reason for Death.

DFPS is the primary agency required by law to investigate and report on child maltreatment fatalities in Texas when the perpetrator is a person responsible for the care of the child. Information from the state's vital statistics department, child death review teams, law enforcement agencies and medical examiner's offices is often used to make reports to DFPS that initiate an investigation into suspected abuse or neglect that may have led to a child fatality. Also, DFPS uses information gathered by law enforcement and medical examiner's offices to reach dispositions in the child fatalities investigated by DFPS. Other agencies, however, have different criteria for assessing and evaluating causes of death that may not be consistent with the child abuse/neglect definitions in the

Texas Family Code and/or may not be interpreted or applied in the same manner as with DFPS. DFPS also produces an annual report regarding child fatalities investigated for suspected abuse and neglect.

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 iv. Education and Training Vouchers (Attachment E)

Annual Reporting of Education and Training Vouchers Awarded

Name of State: Texas

	Total Education and Training Vouchers Awarded	Number of New Education and Training Vouchers Awarded
<u>Final Number: 2013-2014 School Year</u> (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014)	1000	400
2014-2015 School Year (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015)	611	250

Comments:

The Number of New Education and Training Vouchers are clients that received an Education and Training Voucher payment. The 2015-2016 school year has not ended. A projected year to date numbers for this time period is 585 awards, with 255 new participants.

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v. Inter-Country Adoptions

Inter-Country Adoptions

Children adopted from other countries who are reported to be abused and/or neglected are entitled to child abuse/neglect intake and investigation services. Private child-placing agencies provide adoption and post adoption services to families adopting children from other countries. Services that specifically target children adopted abroad are not being developed by DFPS.

The DFPS reporting system enables DFPS to identify the number of children removed from their families that were previously adopted internationally. DFPS obtains social histories when children come into foster care and also documents information related to the agencies that handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and, if the child was removed due to abuse and neglect, the reasons for that removal. This enables staff to report information on inter-country adoptions that disrupt or ended in dissolution, resulting in DFPS being named the child's managing conservator.

In FY 2015, there were eighteen children who came into DFPS foster care who were previously adopted internationally. DFPS only tracks if a public or private entity completed the child's most recent adoption. Based on the most recent adoptions of these eighteen children, five of the children's adoptions were by a private agency. Ten children, while having an inter-country adoption in their history, came into DFPS conservatorship as a result of a failed domestic adoption. Three were designated as unknown because no information on the agency was provided by the adoptive parents during the child's investigation or the information was unknown.

No additional information is available on the specific private agencies that handled these children's international adoptions because no additional information on the agency was provided by the adoptive parents during the child's investigation or the information was unknown. As a part of Phase II IMPACT Modernization, DFPS will explore a method to ensure details regarding the entity that placed the child for adoption are captured during the investigation. DFPS will also review SACWIS as well as AFCARS reporting requirements and determine if the requested data can be captured through either of these means.

The removal reasons for the eighteen children were as follows:

- Nine children were removed due to refusal to accept parental responsibility;

- One child was removed due to refusal to accept parental responsibility and abandonment;
- One child was removed due to physical abuse/risk;
- One child was removed due to neglectful supervision/risk;
- One child was removed due to physical abuse/risk and neglectful supervision/risk;
- One child was removed due to physical abuse/risk, neglectful supervision/risk, and emotional abuse/risk;
- One child was removed due to sexual abuse/risk.

The plans for the eighteen children were as follows:

- Had a plan of family reunification;
- Had a plan of adoption; and
 - Had a plan of another planned permanent living arrangement.

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vi. Monthly Caseworker Visits

► *Description of the state's standards for the content and frequency of caseworker visits for children who are in foster care under the responsibility of the state.*

Monthly Casework Visit Formula Grants and Standards for Caseworker Visits

The federal statute required States to collect and report the following data on caseworker visits for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2012:

- The percentage of children in foster care under the responsibility of the State who were visited monthly by the caseworker handling the case of the child or by the DFPS contractor that provides out-of-state visitation responsibility (supervision); and
- The percentage of the visits that occurred in the residence of the child.

Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grants

P.L. 112-34 revised the purpose for the use of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 formula grants provided to State agencies for monthly caseworker visits. Federal law now specifies that State agencies must use monthly caseworker visit funding to improve the quality of caseworker visits with an emphasis on improving caseworker decision-making on the safety, permanency, and well-being of foster children and caseworker recruitment, retention, and training (section 436(b)(4)(B)(i) of the Act). States must indicate any changes planned for the use of monthly caseworker visits funds to comply with new requirements.

Per ACYF-CB-PI 12-01 beginning in FY 2012, States are to use the following formula to calculate compliance:

For FFY 2015 and each FFY thereafter. The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care.

The following methods are being used to continue to achieve the target:

- **I See You Workers** – These staff are local conservatorship caseworkers permanently assigned to children in DFPS conservatorship when the child is placed outside of their home region. Assignment of an I See You Worker increases the ability to have frequent contact with children who are placed out of their home region. Portions of these positions are paid for by the Monthly Caseworker Visit Grant.

- Interstate Compact for Placement of Children – CPS policy requires that children placed out of state are visited once a month. Interstate Compact for Placement of Children supervision reports are sent to DFPS on a quarterly basis.
- Mobile Technology – The use of tablet personal computers enables caseworkers to document their visits with children in a timely manner.
- Accountability Tools – Data Warehouse reports (weekly and monthly) allow supervisors to monitor caseworker progress in completing required monthly visits. The Performance Management Initiative establishes individual and program accountability by identifying key measures of performance and establishing benchmarks for each measure. It also ensures accountability, oversight from management and good casework. Employee and program performance are tied to corrective action.
- Leadership Development – This is an investment in staff development and retention, and ensures that CPS has the workforce it needs to serve children and families. Components of this effort focus on outcomes and using data to achieve these outcomes.
- Statewide Master Conservatorship Caseworker positions - These positions were created to deploy to areas with high caseloads, typically due to high worker turnover, to ensure casework services continue to those children in care.

Documentation of Monthly Visits

DFPS employs the IMPACT Web-based system as the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System. DFPS caseworkers utilize IMPACT to document their casework decisions and actions at all stages of the case including intake, investigation, risk assessment, case management, eligibility and resource management. The IMPACT system allows caseworkers to choose from a menu of eleven different locations for the contact including residence, foster home, hospital and facility. Data from the IMPACT system is reported to the United States Department of Health and Human Services twice yearly for federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System compliance.

DFPS currently produces weekly and monthly reports that detail the number and percentage of face-to-face contacts for children in conservatorship in open substitute care stages in accordance with ACYF-CB-PI-12-01: Data requirements for States related to reporting monthly caseworker visits under Title IV-B. The reports are utilized by caseworkers and managers to assess progress in meeting the monthly visitation and timely documentation goals. CPS, in conjunction with its Management Reporting Services division, has developed the tracking and reporting system for sharing results with Health and Human Services.

Conservatorship staff continues to use the Mobile Protective Services application that allows staff to work in offline environments, providing caseworkers with a tool to capture client contacts and other information in real time while away from their office. This mobile application is then "synced" with IMPACT to update the case information

State Standards for the Content and Frequency of Caseworker Visits

DFPS currently has requirements for monthly face to face visits in the CPS Handbook. The current policies regarding monthly visits were finalized in August 2012 and are summarized below:

- The worker or the DFPS contractor that provides out-of-state visitation responsibility (supervision) must see the child in person at least once a month.
- The worker or the DFPS contractor that provides out-of-state visitation responsibility (supervision) must visit the child in person at the caregiver's residence or facility on a majority of the visits.
- The visits must be well planned and focused on issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child.
- To prepare for a monthly visit with a child the worker must:
 - Review the current version of the child's service plan to see what services should be in place for the child;
 - Review the case record to see if any outstanding medical or dental exams, psychological reports, report cards, or other critical documents have been received;
 - Contact service providers to discuss progress in the case, if appropriate;
 - Review any other notes or materials necessary to be familiar with the child's current needs and situation; and
 - Review any information that the worker may need to provide to the caregiver or request from the caregiver.

The visit must include quality time with the child separate from the caregiver, if the child is verbal. If the child is nonverbal, the caseworker:

- Interacts with the child and
- Observes the caregiver's interaction with the child.

If the worker is visiting with a sibling group that is placed together, the worker must:

- Spend time with each child, individually and alone (separate from the child's siblings) and
- Spend time when the child and his or her siblings are together.

During the visit with the child, the child's worker must ask about and discuss with the child:

- What has happened since the last visit;
- Contacts held with parents, siblings, and others, if contact is approved in the case plan;
- Child's thoughts and feelings about living with the caregiver and being away from home;
- Child's understanding of why he or she is in care and remains in care;
- Child's interactions with other children in the home;
- Child's progress in school;
- Child's health, growth, and development;
- Child's racial and ethnic identity development;
- Services that have been provided;
- Status of the case;
- Child's opinion of his or her service plan; and
- Youth's opinion of his or her transition plan, if the youth is 16 years of age or older.

The caseworker must keep the child informed about the child's overall progress in substitute care and allow the child to express how he or she feels about the situation and what needs the child may have.

The worker also must help the child prepare for:

- Being reunited with his or her family; or
- Being moved to another permanent living situation, if family reunification has been ruled out.

The worker must also do a physical walk-through of the child's foster or kinship home and backyard when doing the monthly visit at the residence to observe the environment in which the child is living.

With the implementation of the Conservatorship Mobile Protective Services used on the caseworker's tablet personal computer, the documentation tool was designed to assist caseworkers in conducting quality face-to-face visits with the child, caregiver and parent. The tool provides a guide to the topics that must be covered during a visit. The worker documents the contacts made during the monthly visit in the IMPACT system.

Out-of-State Placements

Sections 9311, 9315 and 9340 of the CPS Handbook (Placing Children Outside Texas, Supervision and Understanding the Supervision Stage of an Interstate Placement) contain the policy for supervision of Texas children in DFPS conservatorship in substitute care placed in other states under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The policy states documentation requirements, supervision services expected from other states, and steps to request placement in a residential treatment center outside of Texas.

Progress to Date

DFPS has taken a series of steps to increase the number of caseworker face-to-face contacts with children in substitute care. All conservatorship workers now have tablet computers, further assisting their ability to efficiently manage time needed for documentation and increase face-to-face time with the children on their caseload. The tablet computers allows staff to either directly enter their face-to-face contacts into the IMPACT or to utilize the mobile protective services software to enter the contacts for upload into IMPACT upon return to the office.

The conservatorship regional and state workgroups continue to share ideas and best practices for improving face-to-face contact. DFPS continues monitoring performance through weekly and monthly face-to-face contact reports. DFPS promotes the importance of caseworkers visiting children on their caseloads at a minimum of once per month, with the majority of the visits occurring in the child's home, at every statewide leadership meeting, through monthly statewide scan calls with state and regional leadership and through sending individualized regional data warehouse reports to regional leadership via e-mail from the Quality Assurance Division. This has had positive results.

Include updates on staff development plans paid for by the caseworker visit funding (section 436(b)(4) of the Act), which may include activities designed to improve caseworker retention, recruitment, training and access to technology.

In FY 2013, DFPS purchased curriculum development from the School of Social Work at the University of Texas to develop trainings for Conservatorship staff. In FY 2015, DFPS provided one of these trainings entitled "Visitation Matters" to all Conservatorship staff. DFPS continues to utilize supervision and input from the conservatorship leadership to determine what tools and assistance caseworkers need to ensure timely face to face contacts. There are plans to roll out a second training called "Permanency Conversations" in late FY 2016, focusing on how to hold age and developmentally appropriate permanency conversations. DFPS will continue to use the Monthly Caseworker Visits Grant to develop trainings and supports to improve face-to-face visits. These will be delivered to staff as needed and based upon the needs identified within the year.

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X. Statistical and Supporting Information

vii. Adoption and Permanency Care Assistance Incentive Payments

► *Description of the services the state expects to provide to children and families using Adoption Incentives funds.*

DFPS plans to utilize FY 2015 funds as a portion of the funding for Child Protective Services Direct Delivery Staff Activities, Purchased Adoption Services, and CPS Other Purchased Services. For SFY 2016-2017 funds were appropriated by the 84th Texas Legislature to be used as a portion of the funding for Child Protective Services Direct Delivery Staff Activities, Purchased Adoption Services, and CPS Other Purchased Services. When DFPS submits its Legislative Appropriations Request for SFY 2018-2019 during the summer of 2016, ALGIP funds will be requested for the same three purposes stated above.

CPS direct delivery staff activities include salary and travel for staff who perform direct casework with children in the custody (conservatorship) of the State that leads to family reunification or other permanency goals such as adoption. Purchased adoption services is where DFPS contracts with child placing agencies to perform the functions necessary for the adoption placement and post adoption placement supervision of children in DFPS conservatorship. Other CPS purchased services are those Title IV-B allowable services provided to children and families such as evaluation and treatment services.

DFPS has had no difficulties expending these funds in a timely manner previously and does not foresee any future changes, issues or challenges.